

**Yukon Communicable Disease Control
#4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3H8**

Memorandum

Date: 2021-02-02

21-01

To: All Health Care Providers

From: Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) & Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC)

Subject: COVID provider update #17

Dear Colleagues:

With the recent COVID-19 mass immunization clinics, there are again many moving parts in Yukon's response to the pandemic.

We have a few points to cover in this memo:

1. COVID-19 Immunization
2. Mouth Rinse and Gargle
3. COVID-19 Testing Volume
4. Case Activity in Northern BC

1. COVID-19 Immunization

The COVID-19 vaccine program has progressed well in reaching many of our priority populations.

Every health care provider has an important role to play in how they discuss vaccine with patients. We, as providers, are a trusted voice for many patients and it is our role to provide the right information at the right time. Vaccination reduces the risk of developing severe complications due to COVID-19. People with many chronic conditions, those who are immunosuppressed and those who are pregnant are all at higher risk of adverse outcomes should they contract COVID-19 (CDC, Feb 1, 2021). For many people with autoimmune disease, they may have other conditions or medications that place them at higher risk for more severe outcomes and in many cases, local specialists have actively endorsed vaccine for these

patients. Vaccination is a key tool in our collective efforts to keep the Yukon population protected from COVID-19 and it works best when there is broad coverage of the population.

Please continue to talk with your patients and inform yourselves about the vaccine. Check your usual trusted sources and be a role model and get the vaccine yourself if you haven't already.

Talking with your colleagues can also be very valuable to answer your own questions as well as to share experiences in counselling people who are hesitant to receive the vaccine.

If you have not had the opportunity, please review the COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ's for health care providers available at https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/hss/hss-imgs/hcp_faq_re_covid19_vaccine_0.pdf and visit Sleeves up, Yukon. The future is looking bright <https://yukon.ca/thisisourshot>

Additional resources include:

- Health Canada, Moderna COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/moderna.html>
- Immunize BC, COVID-19 Vaccine, <https://immunizebc.ca/covid-19>
- Public Health Agency of Canada (NACI recommendations): <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

2. Mouth Rinse and Gargle (aka saline gargle)

We are very excited to roll out an additional testing option for children. The saline gargle is now available at select testing locations. See full testing recommendations and procedure attached. Please note the following important features of this test:

- Client selection
 - this test is for school aged children (approx. 5-18 years of age)
 - best suited for mild to moderate illness
 - this method only tests for COVID-19 and not for other viruses
- Specimen collection:
 - patients and caregivers must watch the video to prepare (linked below)
 - this test MUST be witnessed by a health care provider for accuracy & correct process
 - there should be no food or drink 1 hour prior to testing
 - PPE requirements are the same as NP collection

- Specimen transport
 - this test is shipped to BCCDC so the routine turn-around-times apply
 - the specimen MUST be at BCCDC within 4 days after collection
 - the specimen is stable for 4 days refrigerated or at room temperature

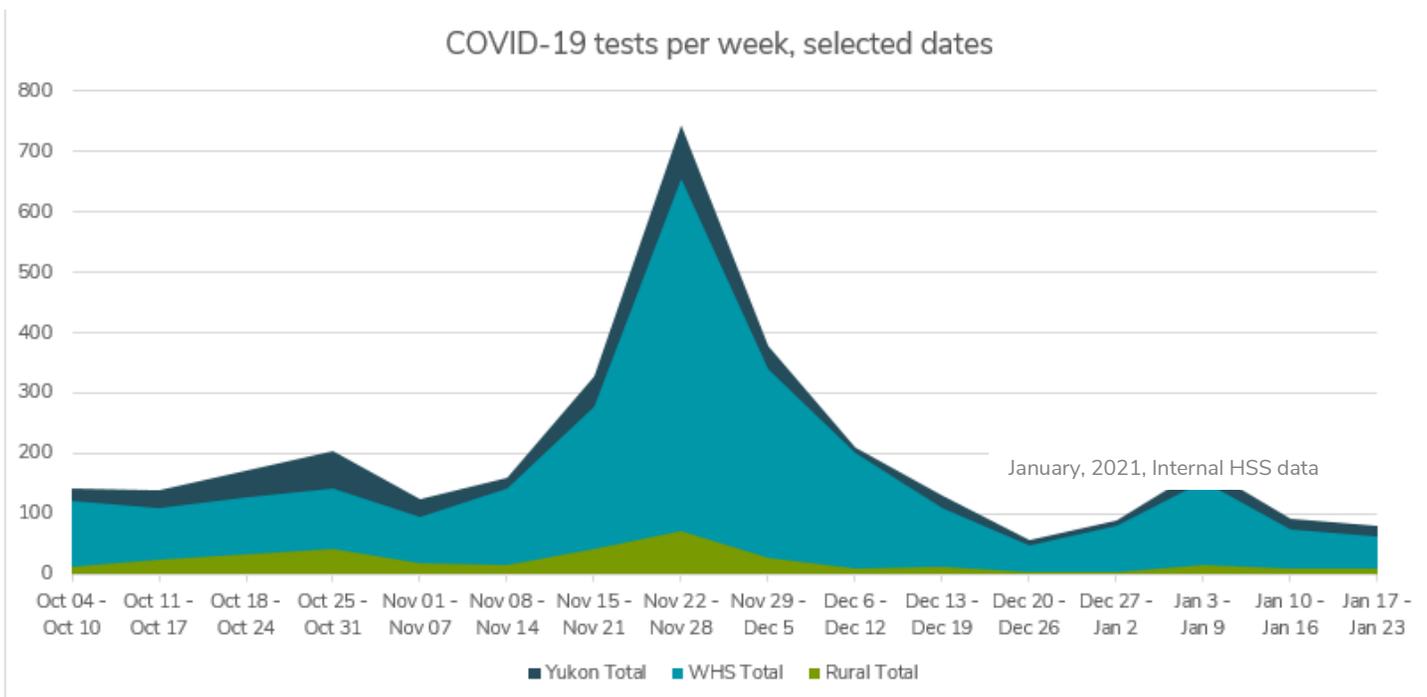
For medical clinics who are currently doing COVID-19 testing, if you feel this would be a value to your clinic please contact YCDC.

The public website for parents is located at: <https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-information/your-health-covid-19/find-out-about-covid-19-mouth-rinse>

3. COVID-19 Testing Volume

With the current overall low viral activity in the territory, we have noted a dramatic decrease in the number of COVID-19 tests (see graph below). There also appears to be a significant correlation between public notifications of COVID-19 exposure and symptomatic persons presenting for testing, suggesting some level of underlying RI illness in the community. We would like to take the opportunity to remind providers of the importance of keeping COVID-19 high in your differential diagnosis and testing people who present with compatible symptoms.

Robust testing helps protect our patients and the community and is an important metric both now and as we look to the future removal of public health measures.



4. Case Activity in Northern BC

Although self-isolation requirements for travelers returning from travel outside Yukon remain, it is worth noting that northern BC is currently experiencing high COVID-19 case activity.

Please keep in mind for anyone who may have travelled in northern BC, including communities near the Yukon border, that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, whether at gatherings or in public places. For anyone with symptoms, ensure you are asking about travel, as well as any known contact with COVID-19 cases.

Persons with a history of travel outside of Yukon or history of exposure in the 14 days prior to symptom onset should be tested for COVID-19 irrespective of pre-existing conditions or possible exacerbation of chronic illness.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support,



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References :

CDC Feb 1, 2021 , <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>